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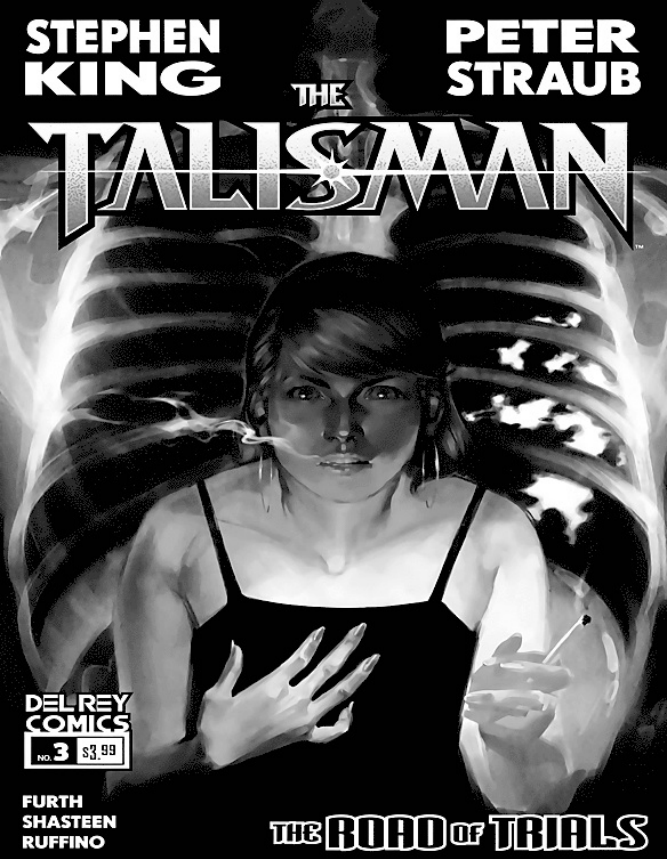
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**STEPHEN
KING**

**PETER
STRAUB**

THE

TALISMAN



**DEL REY
COMICS**

NO. 3 \$3.99

**FURTH
SHASTEEN
RUFFINO**

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

THE TALISMAN

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

STEPHEN KING and PETER STRAUB

Script:
ROBIN FURTH

Pencils/Inks:
TONY SHASTEEN

Colors:
NEI RUFFINO

Lettering:
BILL TORTOLINI

Cover:
MASSIMO CARNEVALE

Production: Erich Schoeneweiss

Editors: Dallas Middaugh, Betsy Mitchell, and Tricia Narwani

Cover art direction: Dave Stevenson and Phil Balsman

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We want to know what you think about *The Talisman*.
Please email us at delreycomics@randomhouse.com.

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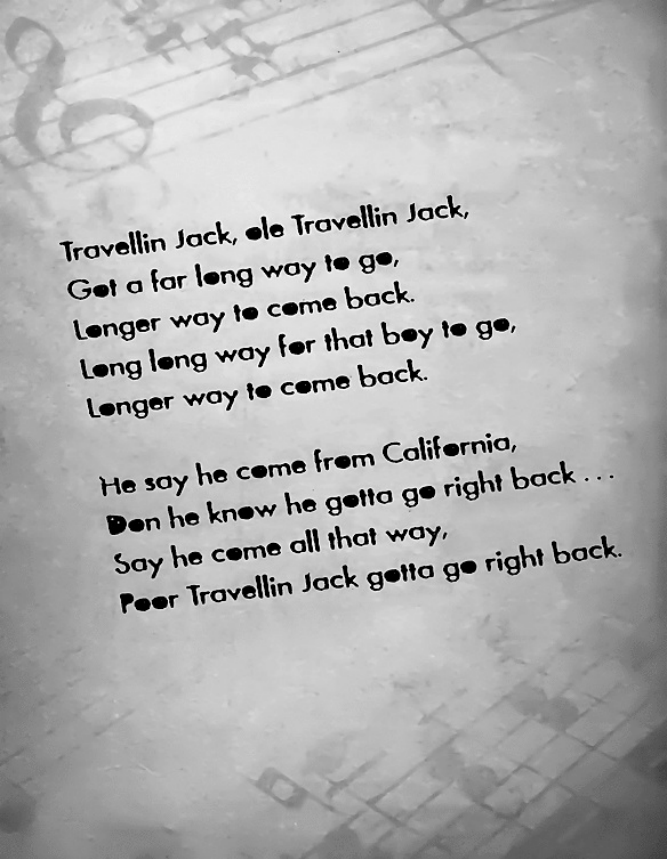
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Only the combined forces of Stephen King and Peter Straub could generate this spellbinding tale of magic, mystery, and monsters in which young Jack Sawyer embarks on an epic quest to save his mother's life—and the fate of two worlds hangs in the balance.

Jack Sawyer's pursuit of the elusive Talisman started in one world—at the run-down arcade where Speedy Parker first urged him to take up the quest. Now it continues in another. With one sip from Speedy's bottle, Jack has "flipped" into the Territories—a mysterious parallel realm where science is magic and magic is science. There he has sought out the help of the benevolent Captain Farren—and first provoked the wrath of the cruel and sadistic Osmond, retainer to the evil Morgan of Orris. A confrontation inside the pavilion gates now threatens to blow Jack's cover—and end his quest before it has even begun.



Travellin Jack, ole Travellin Jack,
Got a far long way to go,
Longer way to come back.
Long long way for that boy to go,
Longer way to come back.

He say he come from California,
Don he know he gotta go right back . . .
Say he come all that way,
Poor Travellin Jack gotta go right back.









*The Outpost Road,
West of All-Hands Village*

NOT
SO FAST,
BOY!

WE WERE COMING AROUND
THE BEND ON THE FAR
SIDE OF ALL-HANDS
VILLAGE...



...WHEN OUR
WAGON OVER-
TURNED.



SNAP

NEIGHGH

MY SON'S
KILT—CRUSHED TO
DEATH UNDER THE
BARRELS.

MY
POOR
BOY!



WHAT?!

HE WAS
JUST SIXTEEN
LAST MAY-FARM
DAY...



YOU MEAN
YOU'VE OVERTURNED
A FULL WAGONLOAD
OF KINGSLAND ALL
ON THE OUTPOST
ROAD?!



LORD MORGAN
IS COMING BY THE
OUTPOST ROAD, AND YOU
KNOW HOW HE DRIVES
HIS DILIGENCE!



IF OSMOND'S
DILIGENCE WERE TO
OVERTURN...

CRACK

WE WOULD
ALL DO BETTER TO
PRAY FOR HIS
DEATH...

THAN
FOR HIS
RECOVERY!

CRACK

CAPTAIN!
TRIPLE-TIME
YOUR MEN TO
THE OUTPOST
ROAD!

SAVE WHAT
BARRELS YOU CAN,
BUT THE ROAD MUST
BE CLEARED BY
FIVE O'CLOCK FOR
MORGAN!

YES,
OSMOND.

NOW TAKE
YOUR IDIOT SON
AND GET OUT
OF HERE.

WE'RE
DAWN LUCKY.
THAT COULD
HAVE BEEN
YOU.

CRACK

OSMOND AND
HIS FOLLOWERS
ARE COMPLETELY
MAD.

HA HA
HA!

CRACK

*All-Hands Village,
the Outpost Road*

YOU
CAN SMELL
THE SPILLED
KINGSLAND ALE
FROM HERE!









THERE'S A SAYING—GOD POUNDS HIS NAILS. ULTIMATELY NO ONE IS EXCEPTED IN THE EYES OF THE CARPENTER.

I WONDER WHICH OF THEM ROBBED THE LAD'S POCKETS AS HE LAY DYING.

IF I KNEW, I'D HAVE THEM HUNG ON A CROSS BY NIGHTFALL.



YOU MUST LEAVE NOW, BEFORE OSMOND DECIDES TO INVESTIGATE YOU FURTHER.

HAVE I GOTTEN YOU INTO TROUBLE?



DIE, YOU BITCH.

IF YOU'RE GONE, OSMOND WILL NOT EVEN THINK OF YOU. HE AND THE OTHERS ARE DISTRACTED...



THEY ARE WAITING FOR THE QUEEN TO DIE, AND SHE WILL DIE. THAT IS, UNLESS YOU CAN SAVE HER...



CARRY ON WESTWARD, AND DON'T TARRY.

WHEN YOU HEAR MORGAN'S DILIGENCE, GET OFF THE ROAD AND HIDE IN THOSE WOODS.

WILL I HEAR THE
DILIGENCE COMING?

AT FULL GALLOP, MORGAN'S
DAMNED HEARSE SOUNDS
LIKE THUNDER ROLLING
ALONG THE EARTH.



I DON'T
WANT TO
FETCH THE
TALISMAN.

WHAT?

I SAID I
DON'T WANT TO GO
AND FETCH THE
TALISMAN.

I'M
AFRAID.





IT'S TOO LATE
TO CRY OFF, BOY!
OSMOND HAS
SEEN YOU!

NOW GET
YOUR SHOULDERS
UP! YOU LOOK LIKE
A KICKED DOG!



AT LEAST
YOU'RE NOT LIKE
AHM. BEING SORRY
FOR YOURSELF IS
A LUXURY YOU
CAN'T AFFORD.



*The Outpost Road,
Heading West,
The Territories*





I REALLY
THOUGHT THAT
WAS OSMOND'S
DILIGENCE.



OUR BOY?
YESSSS.

WHO'S
THERE?!



OW!



UGH! THE
BARK FEELS
LIKE SKIN!

THERE'S
NO WAY I'M
SPENDING THE NIGHT
NEAR THESE
TREES!



WHEN IT STARTS
TO GET REALLY
DARK, I'M FLIPPING
BACK TO MY OWN
WORLD.

JEEZ!
LET GO, WILL
YA?

I DON'T
LIKE THIS.



THERE ARE
DEFINITELY
MORE OF THOSE
WEIRD TREES
UP AHEAD.



RRRRUUMMBBLE

MORGAN'S
DILIGENCE!



RRRRUUMMBBLE



SPEEDY, I WISH
YOUR MAGIC JUICE
COULD MAKE ME
INVISIBLE!

RRRRUUMMBBLE



RRRRUMMBLE



I CAN SMELL
YOU, BOY. BUT I
SHAN'T STOP. YOU'LL
NEVER GET OUT
OF THAT WOOD
ALIVE!

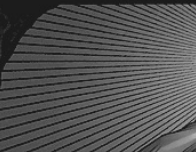




RUSTLE
RUSTLE



HUH?







TO BE CONTINUED

Interview: Tony Shasteen

What kind of art training have you had?

I went to college at the Art Institute of Atlanta with a major in visual communications. At that time you could either choose to branch off into illustration or graphic design. I chose illustration but hedged my bets by taking graphic-design classes as well. It was a good thing because I've spent the better part of my career as a graphic designer. I still illustrated during those years and developed my style over time. I believe those years as a graphic designer only made me a better illustrator and ultimately a better comic book artist. Being a comic book artist requires you to be part illustrator, part designer, part information architect, and part storyteller.

How did you get into drawing for comics?

For me there isn't an easy answer. I was always into reading comics since I was a kid, and I always assumed I would be a comic book artist. Like I mentioned earlier, after college I spent the better part of my career as a graphic designer and art director. Maybe eight years ago I decided that I wanted to start shifting

my focus to illustration. The farther I went down the graphic-design path, the less actual creative work I was doing. It became more about working with clients and less about being creative. I needed to get back to my first love, and comics were the last bastion of pure illustration. I built a comic portfolio and started hitting the conventions. I started the transition by doing covers and the occasional sequential illustration job. Over time, and with a lot of late nights and the understanding of my family, I was able to eventually shift from graphic design to illustration.

Did you have a mentor or somebody who helped you make that first step?

I met a lot of good people during those years when I was trying to break into comics. We have an amazing group of comic professionals in the Atlanta area, and their support has been invaluable. Jolly Roger Studio and Gaijin Studio both helped me immensely. The giving nature and support of those talented studio mates have certainly helped me take the first step and more. They continue to inspire and push me to be a better artist.



PHOTO: © SARENA SHASTEEN

What skill took you the longest to master?

Luckily for me, I don't believe I've mastered any of the skills it takes to be a great comic book artist, and I hope I never do! Knowing that you always have something to improve will keep you from resting on your laurels. Having a good sense of self-loathing tends to drive me on a daily basis . . . and I'm only half joking!

The most difficult part of being a comic book artist for me is the storytelling. I put more effort into my layouts than any other part of the process. That's where the real thinking takes place for me. Drawing detail is easy. Actually telling a story through sequential art in those rudimentary layouts is ten times harder. It's simply a different part of the brain that has to kick in. When I work out my layouts I can't have any television on or listen to music with lyrics. It's just too distracting to the problem-solving portion of my brain. It was the same way when I would do complicated design work. I intentionally work extremely small to keep myself from getting into the detail-drawing mode. Once all those problems are worked out and I blow it up onto my board, it's smooth sailing.



About *The Talisman*: Is this a story that you'd read before you became involved in the project?

I read it years ago and loved it. With its mix of fantasy and horror, I always thought it would be a perfect book to adapt as a comic. Luckily other people thought the same thing!

What scene has been your favorite to draw so far?

All right, not that I try to hide it, but this will bring out the geek in me. I've always loved science fiction and fantasy novels, and I played Dungeons and Dragons growing up. Make fun if you like, but there isn't much to do growing up in rural Tennessee! I was drawing Jack overlooking the Summer Palace in issue 2 while I had the movie *The Highlander* going in the background. All of a sudden it struck me that I was living my geek dream! I rode that euphoric feeling throughout the rest of that scene.



How about on the horizon—what scene out of the novel are you looking forward to drawing?

I don't want to ruin it for anyone who hasn't read the novel, but the scene where Wolf goes on a rampage to save Jack is going to be a blast to draw. It's just going to be brutal and heart-wrenching!

Do you have a favorite character in *The Talisman*?

My favorite character is Jack because I have two young boys of my own, and I can relate to them. Artistically, I like drawing the less attractive characters. I'd rather draw Wolf or Morgan any day over someone attractive. It's just more fun!

Your work on this comic has been extremely detailed. Do you ever try to tell yourself to cut down on the line work, to make it simpler on yourself?

I feel like the story dictates the style, and this particular story requires detail. Early in the story I'm adding a lot of detail, especially in the Territories. The Territories show us a more pure world. It isn't tainted like our world is. As the story develops, things will get bleaker, and I'll be moving into using heavier blacks to give the reader a visual shift. Would it be easier to cut down on the line work? Yes, but I don't believe it would benefit the story in the long run.

Do you have time to do any other projects simultaneously?

I work a lot, so I don't have a lot of time to do other projects. My goal on this project is to pencil and ink a page per day. Those are usually very long days that don't allow for much else. On occasion, when the stars align and I'm awaiting approvals, I'll be offered a small illustration project. Those are few and far between.

I started a project with a friend of mine almost two years ago. It's a three-issue series that requires a very different style of line work than I use for *The Talisman*. When I'm able to work on that project I get up around 7 a.m. and work on it until 9 a.m. Then I work on *The Talisman* from 9 a.m. until around 11 p.m. I found that the simpler streamlined style of that book actually helps me work on *The Talisman*. It clears the cobwebs.

Has there been any particular visual challenge in working on this project?

The initial visual challenge of the book was simply figuring out the look for this project. I have a broad range of styles, and I needed to work out the one that fit the mood of the project but also worked within the schedule. It needed to be dark but also detailed. It will become darker as Jack continues his journey, but that initial decision was definitely the hardest.



In addition to the style, we also needed to pack in a lot of specific details from the book. Fans know and love this book, and they'll be looking for specific details. The book took place in the '70s and early '80s, so it needed to be from that time period without looking dated. That's a difficult challenge. I've done a lot of research to try to make it as believable as possible.

You've done a wonderful job illustrating the emotional exchanges between Jack and his mother and Jack and Speedy. Did you use models for these scenes, or what was your method?

I use models as much as possible for main characters, but I don't tie myself to the reference. I use one male, one female, and one kid for the entire book. I generally use reference for lighting and clothing folds. Sometimes I'm lucky enough to capture an emotion, but usually I have to push it to make it work for the needs of the story. Anything I can do to make my work more believable to the reader without pulling them out of the story, I'll do it.

What's the most important piece of advice you can offer a young artist?

There isn't one path that leads to working in comics. Everyone has a different way of breaking in, but it all starts and ends with extremely hard work and networking. You may be the best artist in the world, but the right people may not see your work when they have a need for it. You have to make connections and maintain those connections. On the other hand, you may have great connections, meet all the right people, but you don't feel the need to work hard at improving your craft or maintaining deadlines. If you're a freelancer, you are your own business. Treat it that way. If you work extremely hard and surround yourself with the right people, you'll have a much better chance of making it in this industry.



Issue 4 Sneak Peek!



We are so excited about the next issue of *The Talisman* we just couldn't wait to share this awesome inked page by Tony Shasteen!



ISSUE 4 ON
SALE IN FEBRUARY.



"A classic . . . rare and dazzling."

—New York *Daily News*, on the #1 New York Times bestseller *The Talisman*



Once you've seen the Talisman, nothing will ever be the same.

The sadistic Osmond has Jack in his clutches at last—and he won't let go until he's squeezed from him the truth about his identity and his presence inside the Queen's Pavilion. Playing dumb could earn Jack a fierce whipping. Anything else could cost him his life.

But Osmond's cruelty is not the only obstacle Jack will have to overcome if he's to continue his quest for the mysterious, all-powerful Talisman. There's also the imminent arrival of Morgan of Orris to deal with—not to mention the feelings of dread and terror welling up inside him that threaten to undermine his determination to secure the prize he's come to the Territories to claim.



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Cover design: Phil Balsman

Front-cover illustration:

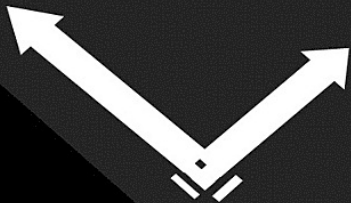
Massimo Carnevale

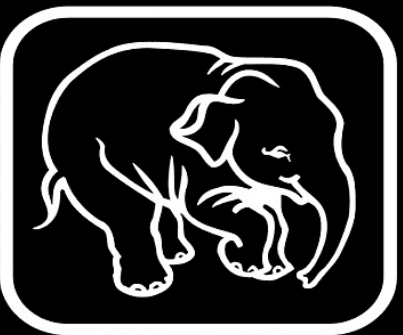
Back-cover illustration:

Tony Shasteen and Nei Ruffino



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